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Source: Graphic

New '419' Trick In Town -Public Warned

The Criminal Investigations Department (CID) of the Ghana Police Service has warned members of the public, particularly businessmen and organisations, of a new method of treachery by '419' syndicates. Members of the syndicates now pose as Ghanaian police personnel, who have uncovered illegal deals involving victims of '419' operators, mostly foreign nationals, and demand certain amounts to be paid to facilitate the 'killing' of the case. 

Some of the 419 operators also write to organisations to seek assistance for certain individuals, who they claim, have fallen victim to conflicts. Mr David Asante-Apeatu, Director of CID, who disclosed this in an interview, said some of the criminals, in order to give credence to their activities, paste his (CID boss's) picture on their letters so that their unsuspecting victims would easily believe them.

Some of them, he said, printed police letterheads with the Coat of Arms on them to push their agenda through.

He explained that the adoption of the new strategy by the syndicates stemmed from the fact that many people were now aware of their normal ways of operation. Throwing more light on the new operations by the '419' groups, Mr Asante-Apeatu said the syndicates corresponded with the unsuspecting victim, informing him of supposed treasures, such as gold, left behind by victim's dead relations.

He said they would ask the unsuspecting victim to pay a certain amount of money to facilitate the shipment of such treasures. Mr Asante-Apeatu said in some instances, they would tell their unsuspecting victim that the government of Ghana had formed what they called the 'Coalition for 419' to fight the activities of the '419' fraudsters.

The perpetrators, in one of their correspondence, pasted the picture of the Director of CID, Mr Asante-Apeatu, as his ID card but wrote the name Mr Ken Yeboah, who is the head of the Commercial Crime Unit of the CID, he added. Mr Asante-Apeatu said the criminals explained in their correspondence that the coalition, which included lawyers and a crack police team, was established to assist those who had fallen victim to '419' fraudsters to retrieve their lost money.

He said they further request all victims to write and explain the circumstances leading to their encounter with the fraudsters so that the coalition could start working on the retrieval of their money. Recently, one of the perpetrators wrote to the United States Embassy, requesting the embassy to grant an entry visa to one James Iyad Dabre, who, the letter claimed, lost his father, Mohammed Ali Dabre and his younger brother, Abass Dabre in the Yendi conflict, Mr Asante-Apeatu stated.

According to him, the writer of the letter, described himself as DSP Frank Anani, the District Superintendent of Police in-charge, Yendi, and requested for protection for the alleged victim. The Director of CID said the criminals also wrote to a Norwegian informing him about the arrest of his supposed wife, Francisca Eyison, at the Kotoka International Airport for being in possession of pornographic pictures, which is an offence in Ghana.

The letter, which, he claimed, was signed by a Mr Kweku Oppong, purporting to be the officer in-charge of Agona Abodom, told the Norwegian that his wife, whom the letter described as a South African, was

being processed for court by the police.Mr Asante-Apeatu said in its bid to scare the Norwegian, the letter further warned him that he could run but could not hide as the police were right on his heels.

He explained that the Norwegian detected the fraud in the letter and wrote to call off the bluff of the supposed police officer.In his letter, the Norwegian said, 'I found your name and address on the Internet. I have got a special statement from what seems to be Ghana Police Service Crime Investigation Department in Agona Abodom. I think this statement is false, since it does not have any address or phone number.'

The letter went on that 'the two signatures are unreadable, and I could not find any information of any Mr Kweku Oppong on your Internet page. I will not comment on what is written in this letter since I think the letter is false'.Mr Asante-Apeatu said many people could have fallen to the threats of the false letter purporting to have come from a 'Crime Investigations Department,' which does not exist.

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